

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



# homemakers' chat

FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

3 HH  
Friday, April 7, 1944

Subject: "STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE AND BISCUIT DOUGH." Information from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

LIBRARY  
CURRENT SERIAL RECORD

APR 10 1944

--ooOoo--

When you say "strawberry shortcake" in wartime, you probably mean the good old-fashioned, country-style kind of shortcake made with biscuit dough. You want to save what sugar you can for other things, so you don't even consider making sponge cake or any other kind of cake foundation for the luscious red berries, especially since that kind of shortcake needs whipping cream to top it off. You can serve a biscuit type shortcake without any cream at all, and it will still be a fine dessert. Be sure to crush about half the berries for the lower layer, so the juice will soak into the split biscuit dough. Of course if you like, you can serve a pitcher of top milk with the shortcake, but you don't actually need it.

Shortcake dough is very much like a plain biscuit dough, but it's a little richer. It contains about a third more fat, the home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say. And usually a little sugar. Suppose you compare your regular biscuit recipe first with the one the home economists use:

For 25 regular medium-sized biscuits, you need 3 cups of sifted flour....4 teaspoons of baking powder....1 teaspoon of salt....4 to 6 tablespoons of fat.... and milk to make a soft dough....generally about one cup. Sift the dry ingredients together, and cut in the fat with a biscuit cutter or a knife. Make a well in the center and add the milk slowly, stirring from the center until a soft dough is formed. Pat or roll out the dough on a lightly floured board until it is about three-fourths of an inch thick. Or knead it gently for about 18 strokes and then roll it out. Cut into biscuits, and bake in a hot oven---about 450 degrees---for



That's the foundation recipe for any biscuits. Now for shortcake, you use exactly the same ingredients, but increase the fat. Use 2 tablespoons more--half a cup of fat to three cups of sifted flour. And add about 2 tablespoons of sugar. Roll the dough out thinner than for ordinary biscuits---about a quarter of an inch thick. You make the dough thinner because you bake shortcake double---that is, in two layers, wiped between with fat, so they will slip apart easily. You can bake the shortcake in one large double round, or in double individual biscuits. Cook in a hot oven, but not quite as hot as for plain biscuits---425 degrees is about right.

In case you prefer to make biscuits with sour milk, you can make shortcake with sour milk, too. Use the same amount of sour milk as sweet, but instead of the 4 teaspoons of baking powder, use 2 teaspoons of baking powder and half a teaspoon of baking soda. Sift the soda with the flour and baking powder. Don't put it in the sour milk.

Now for some pointers on biscuits in general. Did you ever wonder why different people make such different biscuits, even when they say they use the same recipe? With exactly the same ingredients and oven temperature, your biscuits might come out four different ways. It's all in the way you mix and handle the dough. If you just stir the dough together and then drop it by spoonfuls on a baking sheet, you'll have small irregular rough-looking drop biscuits, or emergency biscuits. That's a good kind to make when you're in a hurry. If you stir the dough quickly and roll and cut out the biscuits with the least possible handling, you'll have a flat, smooth, crusty biscuit. That's the kind many people like best and a good way to handle the dough for shortcake. If you knead the biscuit on the board before you roll it out, you'll get a tall, light, flaky biscuit. The home economists have found 15 to 18 strokes of kneading just enough. If you knead the dough any more than that, you get a tough, close-grained biscuit---the kind the funny papers joke about.

And here are one or two other points besides tender light handling to get tender, light biscuits: Don't use any more flour on the board or rolling pin than





you have to. Just enough to keep the dough from sticking, And if you're in a hurry and still want tender flaky biscuits rather than rough drop biscuits, cut the dough with a floured knife into squares or rectangles rather than use a round biscuit cutter. You'll save a lot of time. A plain biscuit in any shape tastes just the same.

So far we've been talking about biscuits made by the standard rule, with short-cake as the only variation, and maybe square biscuits instead of round. But you can change the flavor and appearance of biscuits in a number of ways, and use biscuit dough for various main dishes and desserts.

You can add grated cheese, or grated orange rind, or chopped nuts, or raisins or peanut butter to plain biscuit dough. If you add as much as 4 tablespoons of peanut butter, use half as much other fat as the recipe calls for. You can put chopped cooked ham or bacon into the dough for flavor. One of the latest ideas is to put soya flour into biscuits in place of about one-eighth of the regular flour. This enriches the biscuits in food value and in flavor, too.

"Surprise" or stuffed biscuits will be popular with the family. Use a rather soft dough, and bake the biscuits in muffin tins. Drop a little dough in each greased tin. Then put a spoonful of chopped cooked meat in the center of the dough--or some cheese or marmalade or jam,---cover with more dough and bake.

"Pinwheel" biscuits are still another variation from rolled biscuits. The idea is to spread the dough out, cover it with a flavory filling, roll it up, and cut off slices about an inch thick. Bake these cut side up. For sweet biscuits for breakfast, spread the dough with cinnamon and brown sugar and chopped raisins. Or with honey, marmalade or jam. Sweet biscuits brown quickly, so don't have your oven as hot as for ordinary biscuits. Bake at 400 or 425 instead of 450 degrees.

Pinwheel biscuits spread with chopped cooked ham or sausage or some other meat make a good main dish for dinner or supper. Serve them with a cheese or tomato sauce. Of course meat pies with biscuit tops are always good. And here's a suggestion: Instead of making the crust in one large round, make cut-out biscuits. Then the steam from the gravy will escape between the rounds, and the biscuit part won't be soggy.

When it comes to desserts based on biscuit dough, you can have cobblers, Dutch fruit cakes, steamed puddings---and of course, what we talked about first--short-cakes! With any kind of fruit you like, as well as strawberries.

